

**REMARKS**

The present application was filed on April 15, 2004 with claims 1 through 25. Claims 1 through 25 are presently pending in the above-identified patent application. Claims 1, 16 and 25 are proposed to be amended herein, and claims 2 and 18 are proposed to be cancelled,  
5 without prejudice.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 10, 16, 23 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Rydin (United States Patent Number 6,680,649). The Examiner indicated that claims 2-9, 11-15, 17-22 and 23 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

10 Consistent with the Examiner's suggestion, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 2, which the Examiner has indicated would be allowable. In addition, Applicants have amended independent claims 16 and 25 to include the limitations of claim 18, which the Examiner has indicated would be allowable.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of  
15 independent claims 1, 16, and 25 under Section 102(e).

**Dependent Claims 2-15 and 17-24**

Claims 3-15 and 17, 19-24 are dependent on claims 1 and 16, respectively, and are therefore patentably distinguished over Rydin because of their dependency from independent claims 1 and 16, as amended, for the reasons set forth above, as well as other elements these  
20 claims add in combination to their base claim. The Examiner indicated that claims 3-9, 11-15, 17, 19-22 and 23 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

All of the pending claims, i.e., claims 1, 3-17, and 19-25, are in condition for allowance and such favorable action is earnestly solicited.

25 If any outstanding issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

The Examiner's attention to this matter is appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



5  
Date: April 27, 2006

10  
Kevin M. Mason  
Attorney for Applicants  
Reg. No. 36,597  
Ryan, Mason & Lewis, LLP  
1300 Post Road, Suite 205  
Fairfield, CT 06824  
(203) 255-6560